

Nixon's Statement on Resignations

The text of President Nixon's statement announcing the resignations of Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and White House aides H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and John Dean:

I have today received and accepted the resignation of Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General of the United States. I am appointing Elliot L. Richardson to succeed him as Attorney General and will submit Mr. Richardson's name to the Senate for confirmation immediately.

Mr. Kleindienst asked to be relieved as Attorney General because he felt that he could not appropriately continue as head of the Justice Department now that it appears its investigation of the Watergate and related cases may implicate individuals with whom he has had a

close personal and professional association. In making this decision, Mr. Kleindienst has acted in accordance with the highest standards of public service and legal ethics. I am accepting his resignation with regret and with deep appreciation for his dedicated service to this Administration.

Pending Secretary Richardson's confirmation as Attorney General, I have asked him to involve himself immediately in the investigative process surrounding the Watergate matter. As Attorney General, Mr. Richardson will assume full responsibility and authority for coordinating all federal agencies in uncovering the whole truth about this matter, and recommending appropriate changes in the law to prevent future camapgin

abuses of the sort recently uncovered. He will have total support from me in getting this job done.

In addition, I have today accepted the resignations of two of my closest friends and most trusted assistants in the White House, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman.

I know that their decision to resign was difficult; my decision to accept it was difficult; but I respect and appreciate the attitude that led them to it.

I emphasize that neither the submission nor the acceptance of their resignations at this time should be seen by anyone as evidence of any wrongdoing by either one. Such an assumption would be both unfair and unfounded.

Throughout our association, each of these men has

demonstrated a spirit of selflessness and dedication that I have seldom seen equaled. Their contributions to the work of this Administration has been enormous. I greatly regret their departure.

Finally, I have today requested and accepted the resignation of John W. Dean III from his position on the White House staff as Counsel.

Effective immediately, Leonard Garment, Special Consultant to the President, will take on additional duties as Counsel to the President, and will continue acting in this capacity until a permanent successor to Mr. Dean is named. Mr. Garment will represent the White House in all matters relating to the Watergate investigation and will report directly to me.